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Lviv, March 4th, 2022

One of the four primary aims of higher education is “preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies (Council of Europe) . We have a right to say that the Russian system of education and science deliberately failed this mission!

APPEAL OF UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY TO THE GLOBAL ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH COMMUNITY

Today is the 9th day of the blatant military invasion of Russian aggressor into Ukraine and the 9th year of the war Russia started in 2014. This aggression is strongly supported by Belarus. The international isolation of the Russian Federation is increasing, with representatives of different industries and professions. The world refuses to cooperate with an aggressor-state that violates all the basic norms of a civilized community in all areas. Education and science must not be an exception.

For many years the scholars from Russia have benefited from various international research and internship grant programs provided by the Western democracies. Sadly, «return on investment» was used to strengthen and solidify Putin’s anti-democratic regime. Consummation of financial means without appropriation of the civic values and virtues is a manifestly unambiguous sign of the Russian academic community’s complicity with the regime. The shocking silence of a vast majority of the scholars in Russia in view of Russian invasion in Ukraine and the war crimes committed by the Russian army cannot be justified by any human and ethical standards. To willingly remaining silent and passive in view of atrocities and suffering inflicted by the Russian Government on the innocent civilian population of Ukraine makes Russian academia equally responsible for the crimes against humanity. Sadly, the Belorussian scholars also remain silent observers of the Russia’s crimes against humanity in Ukraine. Their support of the actions of the Lukashenko regime as well as silent contemplation of the Russian invasion is also a crime.

Therefore, we appeal to all members of global academic and research community:

1. Suspend all forms of academic cooperation with Russian and Belorussian institutions and scientists affiliated with them who are publicly supporting Putin’s regime or remaining silent; do not participate in any events organized by Russian or Belorussian institutions or held in Russia or Belarus.

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2. Prevent the participation of Russian and Belorussian research institutions and affiliated with them scientists in international grant programs, conferences and projects etc.
3. Discontinue scholarship programs dedicated to Russian and Belorussian applicants and allocate them to the nationals of countries affected by Russian aggressive imperialist policies – Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova.
4. Suspend Russian and Belorussian researchers, students and institutions from the participation in current programs of international academic mobility.
5. Do not nominate Russian and Belorussian scientists affiliated with Russian/Belorussian institutions to the editorial boards of scientific journals/book series.
6. Discontinue your membership in the editorial boards of Russian and Belorussian scientific journals, do not publish articles therein.

The proposed restrictions do not apply to individuals and institutions that have publicly condemned Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine.

The war has many different fronts and is being fought in both military and economic, cultural and ideological aspects. Russia's many years of propaganda have been the basis for this military phase of a full-scale invasion. This ideological war and propaganda started long ago and, unfortunately, is likely to be long-lasting unless we take radical measures. In various forms, it can last for years. The field of higher education will also be a kind of battlefield - a war of humanity against meanness. The Council of Europe has defined one of the four primary goals of higher education as "preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies". It became clear that the system of Russian education and science has chosen a completely different top priority. This is a mass and subconscious propaganda of the idea of Russian imperialism and totalitarianism. The main platform for broadcasting such aggressive Russian narrative was mainly the worldwide network of Russian scientific institutes and centers of Russian studies. Dr. Kateryna Smaglyi in the Analytical Report "Hybrid Analytica: Pro-Kremlin propaganda in Moscow, Europe and the U.S." (2018) analyses co-optation of Russian and Western experts into the pool of proxy communicators for the Putin regime - <https://www.underminers.info/publications/hybridanalytica> Author emphasizes that the "Western governments and academic institutions should officially acknowledge the threat posed by Russia's subversive information warfare, step up efforts to expose Russia's network of agents within Western academia, and adopt mechanisms to safeguard professional integrity and due diligence processes". ***We are deeply concerned about the above mentioned activity of***

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Russian Centers in Western institutions and their possible connections with the Russian government. Thus, we highly recommend to follow those recommendations and examine if there are any signs of Russian state-sponsored networks in your academic communities.

Today is not the time for half-measured actions. The world ignored the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008; the world did not react adequately in 2014 when Russia occupied Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk districts. The world cannot repeat the same mistake over and over again. Impunity encourages new violations. In the famous words, “the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” We believe that the academic community should lead by example and show an adequate reaction to Russia’s barbaric actions. We have to unite as a world to stand against aggression. Academia should be based on the values of honesty, justice, and respect for rights and freedoms of others. We are convinced that intellectuals and scholars have a special responsibility for peace, freedom and the prevention of dictatorship!

Ensure Putin’s Russia full isolation from the civilized democratic world.

Yours sincerely,
Rectorate and Operating Group

If you want and can join humanitarian activities, you may send any aid you deem appropriate. Please check our FB page for the list of current needs - <https://www.facebook.com/UkrainianCatholicUniversity>

UCU’s operation is now fully devoted to defending our country and supporting people affected by the war. We would be grateful for your donations to ensure the fulfillment of our mission during this time, as well as the functioning and safety of the university community - <https://supporting.ucu.edu.ua/donate/>.

You may also transfer your donations to Ukrainian Catholic University Foundation <https://ucufoundation.org/donate/>.

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